

Rao Wins Food Rheology Award

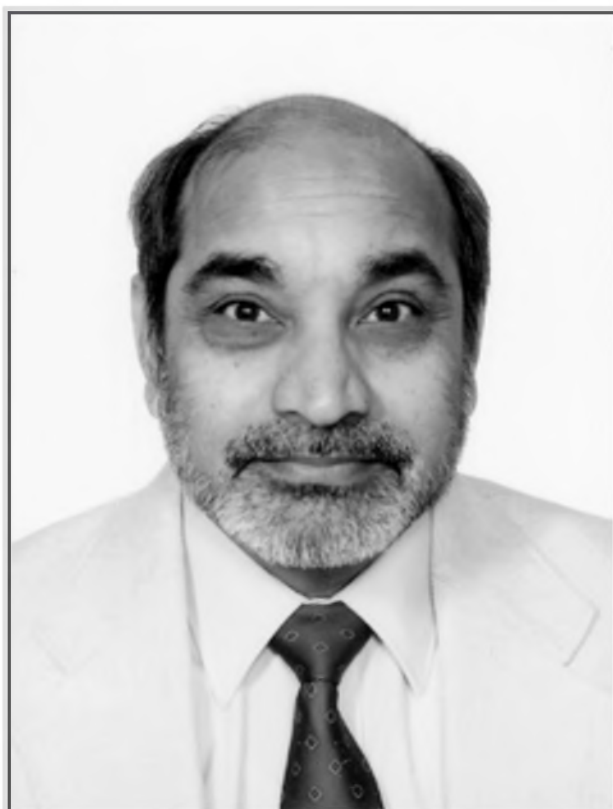
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by John Zakour

GENEVA, NY: The American Association of Cereal Chemists awarded the G.W. Scott Blair Memorial Award for Excellence in Food Rheology to M. Anandha 'Andy' Rao, professor of Food Engineering in Cornell University's Department of Food Science and Technology (FS&T) at their annual meeting, November 5-9, in Kansas City, MO. The award was in recognition of Rao's research on the rheological properties of fruit juices and purees, pectin gels, and starch dispersions. Rao received an engraved plaque and a check for \$500. Malcolm C. Bourne, FS&T/Geneva, received the same award in 1993 for his work on food texture.

"I am very pleased, but not surprised, that Andy was selected to receive this award," said Dr. Richard Durst, chairman of the FS&T program at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station where Rao pursues his research. "Not only is Andy an internationally recognized expert in food rheology, but he is an outstanding educator and one of the most genuinely amiable and cooperative members of this department."



Suggested caption: Professor Andy Rao

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Rao received his Ph.D. from The Ohio State University in 1969, came to Geneva

in 1973, and has been one of the mainstays of the food science program ever since. Rao, a food engineer, specializes in rheological properties of foods, thermal processing of foods, and extraction, filtration, and concentration of fruit juices. Rheology is the science of deformation and flow of matter.

"Rheological properties play important roles in the design of food processing and handling operations, quality control, and sensory assessment of foods," said Rao. "Over the years, the Fruit and Vegetable Processing Pilot Plant at Geneva has provided me unique opportunities for preparing samples of apple sauce, apple juice, and tomato concentrates, specifically for studying their rheological properties."

Like many other scientists, Rao's biggest challenge has been finding funding. He notes that funding for research in food engineering has been limited to the USDA NRI program. Allocation to the program has remained stagnant for a long time and was cut for 2001.

Rao looks forward to the future of both his program and rheology. "I see exciting opportunities due to developments in instrumentation that will help us study food structure and understand the relationship between the structure and rheological behavior of foods, and computer hardware and software that will help us examine food processing operations by means of computer simulation," he said.

Rao feels fortunate to have such a viable research program and is especially proud of all his graduate students who are now employed in industry and academia. Students who have completed their study with Rao and are employed throughout the world in industry and academia are: Jirarat Tattiyakul, Ellen K. Chamberlain, Jun-Tse Fu Hung-Ju Liao, Wei Hsiu Yang, Martin F. Sancho, Juliana Morales Castro, Titima Sornsrivichai, Ramaswamy C. Anantheswaran, Vinod K. Goel (co-advisee). The visiting scientists who also helped in the program are: Alfredo A. Vitali (Brazil), Paul Okechukwu (Nigeria), Carlos Grosso (Brazil), and Cheila Mothé (Brazil). He also credits the success of his program to people who have worked with him over the years, including Herb Cooley, who has been his technician since 1978.

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